Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCEC) Overview

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- Welcome & Housekeeping
- Introduction
- HCEC Agencies
- What Do HCECs Do
- Contacting Local HCEC
- Service and Referral Areas
- Additional Services Under EDI
- Questions & Answers



Housing Consumer Education Centers

of Massachusetts

www.masshousinginfo.org | 800-224-5124





- Berkshire Housing Development Corporation
- Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)
- Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHA)
- Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC)
- Way Finders
- Metro Housing | Boston
- RCAP Solutions, Inc.
- South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)
- NeighborWorks Housing Solutions (NHS)





- Serve as the "Housing Emergency Rooms" and one-stop shop for all things housing
- Offer answers to a wide range of questions about all types of housing problems designed to maximize housing stability, strengthen investments, and minimize disputes
- Serve as the framework for connection to other programs, such as RAFT/ERMA; voucher programs; and others
- Help people understand the complex and confusing network of affordable housing programs
- Educate people about their rights and responsibilities, including how to be a good tenant or landlord
- Connect them with "specialists" such as legal aid



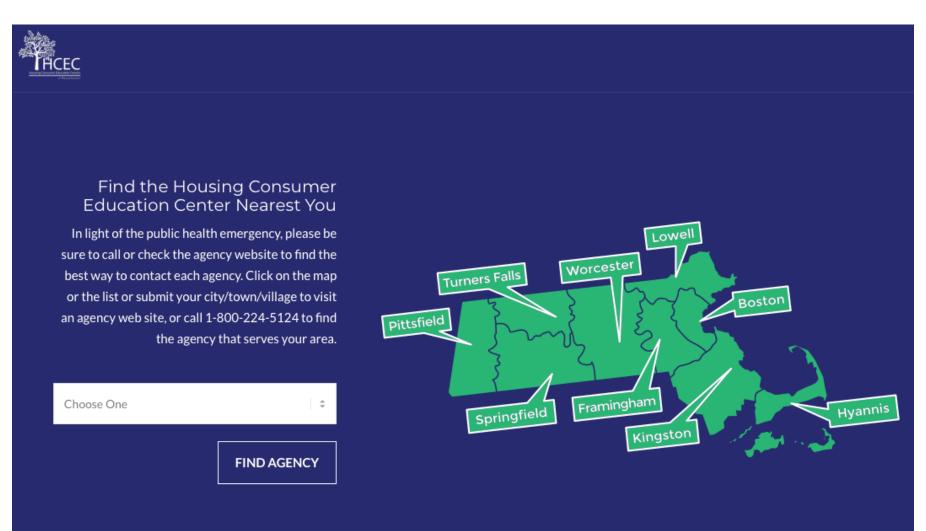


- Families experiencing homelessness
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Tenants
- Landlords
- Prospective home buyers
- Homeowners



Contacting the Local HCEC





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Contacting the Local HCEC



- Call or email is best
 - Walk-in hours are available during "normal" times (and some even now)
 - All are answering the phone during business hours
 - Will return voicemails if someone does not answer the phone
 - Make sure phone number given can accept calls and voicemails (if possible)
- Most information is shared electronically, but can work with households that do not have access to the internet or phone
- All can work with clients who have limited English proficiency



HCEC Intake and Assessment



- HCEC staff will listen, ask questions, and then provide appropriate services or referrals
- HCECs are closely linked to RAFT staff
 - Clients may be processed through HCEC before being referred to RAFT
 - Most consumers have more than one need. Intake through HCECs first helps to better support the household
- HCECs also have workshops and other resources that can be accessed without a referral



- RAAs vary in services offered internally at their agencies
- If an HCEC does not offer a service in house, they will refer a client outside of the agency
- HCECs have strong relationships with service providers in their area
 - Clients may need to follow up on referrals independently



Financial Assistance and Benefits



- RAFT, ERMA, and similar local programs
- Financial literacy resources
- Fuel assistance and working utility companies
- SNAP benefits, WIC, and food pantry referrals
- Childcare, including subsidized childcare
- HomeBASE and similar programs



- Shelter resources for individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Housing search for those who have a voucher and need help finding an apartment
- Affordable housing search
 - Help applying for various housing subsidies
 - Help applying to affordable housing opportunities
- ■Helping property owners list their unit





- Basic information on landlord/tenant law
- Information on how to be a good tenant and/or landlord
- Light mediation
- Fair housing information and referrals to MCAD
- Referrals to legal services, including expanded programming under EDI
- Referrals to community mediation, including expanded programming under EDI



Additional Referral Areas



- Domestic violence information
- ESL
- Workforce development/job training
- Health care referrals, including mental health
- Substance abuse referrals
- Home buyer education for low-income and/or first-time homebuyers
- Referrals to TPP, including expanded programming under EDI





- \$3.75M budget in FY20; \$6.5M budget in FY21
 - New spending almost exclusively on new staff and supporting new staff
- \$1.25M of expansion for "service coordinators" or "light case managers"
 - Enhanced service provision that includes navigating and connecting to the various assistance options and coordination
 - HCEC staff will follow up on whether client needs further assistance connecting to resources
 - Expanded services also available at under Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA) and Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND)





QUESTIONS?

www.masshousinginfo.org

http://www.mahousinghelp.com